

# beechleaves

Newsletter of the Manawatu Tramping and Skiing Club



P.O. Box 245, Palmerston North 4440 [www.mtsc.org.nz](http://www.mtsc.org.nz) <https://www.facebook.com/MTandSC>

## Issue 5: June 2017



Club meetings are held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month at the Rose City Aquatic Club Rooms, 50 Park Street, Palmerston North (next to the Lido). Meetings begin at 7.30pm.

### Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> June: That 4-letter word beginning with S...

How many ways do we enjoy SNOW? Be it on skis, a board, toboggan, bag or boots, many of our members get into it at every opportunity. This club night is all about being out and about in the depths of WINTER, and what you want to know about being there. Our talk-photo-video presentation will briefly cover topics such as – “Happiness is taking



your young family skiing”, “Activities around the Lodge”, “Snowcraft”, “Skiing in NZ”, “Ski touring (skiing up to ski down)” and “Overseas ski adventures”. Jess Thomas, Rob Pringle, Ken Mercer, Peter Rawlins and Howie Nicholson will share a few of their adventures along the way.

This talk will be of interest to newbies and old hands alike, so even if you are just curious about getting into the snow this year, feel free to come along. As always, you don't have to be a member to come along - All Welcome.

### Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> July: SAR - Search and Rescue

**Speaker Andy Brooke:** Andy has been with the Police (and MOT) for 35 years. Based in Palmerston North for the past 18 years (Section Sergeant, General Duties Branch) and on the SAR squad for 13 years, the last 9 as the Officer in Charge for Manawatu Police Search and Rescue. Andy has also been a member of MTSC for the last 11 years.

**Talk Synopsis:** Search is an Emergency and a Classic Mystery. Not so much a “Who Done it?” as a “Where was it done?”



Search is underpinned by investigation. This presentation describes the decisions made around searches; where to search, when to start, how to search. This develops into how a search progresses including different search methods and some examples. Andy's talk will be followed by a Q&A session, then three club members active in SAR, will briefly describe some of their own experiences.

# REPORTS AND NOTICES



## MTSC President: John Beech

[president@mtsc.org.nz](mailto:president@mtsc.org.nz)

Hi all, it has been a quiet month and I don't have much in the way of controversial or major issues to mention. Hopefully many of you have been out and about in the hills over the last few weeks.

A couple of weeks ago I spent the weekend at the Pohangina base. My colleague and I ran a Duke of Edinburgh course for a group of 15 students from school. The base is one of a number of DOC lodges that can be booked by any member of the public. We enjoyed our time there and I want to draw your attention to these excellent lodges that DOC maintains. There are a number of them throughout the country and we have a few within 2 hours' drive from Palmerston North. They are excellent value for money and have all the necessary facilities for families and groups. Pohangina Base has room for 17 in comfortable rooms with beds or bunks, hot showers, a fridge freezer, stove, microwave and all the kitchen utensils you would need. How much would you expect to pay for such a facility? How about \$10 per person per night. That's what I call good value for money. These places are underutilised and I would encourage anyone who wants a few days away in a nice quiet location for not much money to jump on DOC's website and have a look for our local ones.

We are fast approaching the beginning of the ski season and to encourage more use of the lodge the committee have outlined the following promotion: That members are able to bring non-members at members rates up to the start of the July school holidays. Hopefully this will act as an incentive for skiers to bring their friends up for the discounted price in the lead up to the season getting into full swing.

*John*

## MTSC Chief Guide Report: Guest contribution from Peter Rawlins

Recently, one of our mid-week tramping group members had a medical emergency that required the trip leader to set off the club PLB as well as their own PLB. You can read their story later in this newsletter or on the club facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=manawatu%20tramping%20and%20skiing%20club>

Events such as this will happen from time and, while we can't necessarily prevent them, we can be well prepared when they do. After talking to Chris Mercer, the trip leader, and reading their account, I would like to congratulate Chris and the others for their preparedness and the calm way that they went about the rescue. Rescues like this can take a lot of time and the helicopter might not be able to reach the injured party due to weather etc. Chris and his team were well prepared with extra clothing so that they could stay in one place for several hours and not get too cold. They also had torches with them so that they could still get out of the bush even though it got dark. One thing that the group carried that you might not normally think about is some fire lighting equipment. They managed to make a fire and in addition to boosting morale, warming them up, and keeping them busy, the smoke proved useful to help the helicopter zero in to where they were. When they heard the helicopter, they put some wet leaves on the fire to make extra smoke. Great job everyone.

I think there are a number of things to learn from this episode. The club has three PLBs; two are stored in the van, the other is at my house. When one of the club PLBs is activated, the rescue coordination centre (RCC) in Wellington rings me to let me know. If they can't get hold of me then Howie Nicholson is next on the list followed by Hugh Wilde. Chris had also set his PLB off so the first thing the RCC need to sort out is whether they are dealing with one incident or two and hence, whether to deploy one helicopter or two. In the most recent incident, although in the same spot, the two PLBs were indicating that they were nearly three kilometres apart. In a previous club incident when two PLBs were set off, the locations suggested that they were over a kilometre apart when they were in fact in the same spot. I'll go into a little more detail about how the signals are picked up below.

Since Chris had sent the trip list and the route intentions to the [intentions@mtsc.org.nz](mailto:intentions@mtsc.org.nz) email address I could confirm that the two PLBs were in the same party although we could not confirm that there were not two incidents with the same party. RCC decided to deploy just one helicopter in this instance. Having the trip list was really helpful. As a suggestion from me, could you please make sure you put down the trip leaders cell phone number and the emergency contact home and cell phone number as well. In a previous incident, the trip leader had not submitted the intentions to the email address and we only had their home number. When we rang to get hold of the trip details, the contact wasn't there and we had no cell phone number for them and so we had no way of getting the necessary information.

You may wonder why the trip leader's cell phone number is important? While I might not be able to ring you in the mountains, I can at least send you a text to ask you to ring me when you get in cell phone range. This was helpful for one club group who were forced to stay an extra night in a hut because of flooded rivers. SAR had suspected that this might be the case so when they came out the next morning they got my text and rang me, so we knew they

were safe and could stand down search and rescue. In these circumstances, people may not think to ring or may not have my cell phone number or the cell phone number of the other club SAR contacts. A text from me solves this problem. In other instances, SAR may need to get more information from the trip leader or might be able to update them on the state of the injured party. The membership secretary will be asking you to check your member details when you renew your subscription this year, and also ask you for cell phone numbers for you and your emergency contact as well. These will go into a club dropbox that is accessible by the committee and our SAR contacts. In addition to this, having them on the intentions sheet saves us time.

Turning back to the PLBs now, I'm not sure how many people know about the signals that are given off and how these are picked up. I thought this information would be helpful and would explain why the RCC's strongest advice is to only set off one PLB rather than multiple. There are two sorts of satellites that pick up the signal. Geostationary earth orbiting (GEO) satellites that sit over the equator, and low earth orbiting (LEO) satellites which circle the globe at right angles to the equator, traveling over the North and South Pole. The following comes from a RCC pamphlet on PLBs:

"When you activate a distress beacon, satellites detect its 406MHz digital signal, including its unique identification number (UIN or Hex ID, rather like a barcode). The GEO satellite, which is in a fixed position high above the equator, will pick up the signal almost instantly, as long as its view of the beacon is not obstructed by terrain. This satellite can read the beacon's unique number, but cannot provide a position unless the beacon has GPS. A GPS calculates the beacon's position and sends that, along with the alert, to the satellite. LEO satellites will regularly pass over your position and they, too, can pick up the beacon's alert as they pass over your area. Because they are moving, they can work out the position of the beacon even if it has no GPS, but to do this they need to pass over your position twice. The first alert could take about an hour to receive, and then it takes another hour or longer for the second satellite to pass and work out the beacon's location."

As you can see from this information it is always better to have a GPS enabled PLB and position it so that it has a clear view of the GEO satellites low in the northern sky. Most PLBs also give off the old 121.5 MHz signal which is used by the helicopter to hone in on your position. This is simply done by ear: the pilot will hear a pinging in the headset which gets louder as they move towards it and softer as they move away from it. It tends to bounce off the local terrain and so you can imagine how difficult it is when there are two beacons going off in the same area.

Given that two deployed PLBs could indicate that they are some distance apart, suggesting two possible incidents and two competing 121.5 MHz signals making it hard for the helicopter pilot to try and sort out, the very strong advice from the Rescue Coordination Centre is to only set off one beacon for one incident. Rest assured that the club's PLBs are well within their battery lifespan (one has three years to go and the other two have six years) and are waterproof so should be in good working order. There are instructions on how to deploy the antennae, and also a way of checking that the unit is working, written on the back of the unit.

If you would like to know more about SAR please talk to me, Howie or Hugh, or anyone else that you know is involved in SAR. We also have a club night coming up when one of club members and the Police SAR coordinator Sgt Andy Brooke will be talking about the organisation.

*Safe and happy tramping, Peter Rawlins*



### **First Tracks - Ski Captain Howard Nicholson**

Ruapehu Alpine Lifts recently announced the installation of new facilities that allow snow-making to happen while temperatures are above freezing. Happy Valley learners' area is scheduled to open at Queen's Birthday weekend, and MTSC has a great deal on offer to help you and your friends take advantage of the extended ski season. Look for the details elsewhere in this newsletter.

The annual "Food Carry" is on 16-18 June, and you are all most welcome to come along to help. This will involve carrying food to the lodge, last-minute maintenance, cleaning and preparations

for the coming season - see the trip preview in this newsletter. Space is limited so please let me know if you wish to come along.

Opportunities to enjoy the comfort of the lodge and to "play" in the snow, whatever that means to you, are listed on the trip card, or you can book your own trips by contacting the Lodge Booking Officers directly. See our web site, <http://www.mtsc.org.nz/> for details.



### **The Lodge – Lodge Manager John Lyttle**

In support of RAL's commitment to open the lower mountain at the beginning of June we are running a promotion up to the July school holidays that members can bring guests (non-members) at members rate. Only the lower mountain will be open so if

you are coming for boarding or skiing this will best suit beginners or people who just want to have a play in the snow.

This winter season we will be running theme weekends as well as a technical ski program that will run over 3 weekends. This will include technique analysis and discussions on the purchasing and maintaining of your equipment. Check the trip card on our website for dates.

Look forward to seeing many of you at the lodge this winter.

## Great Walk price rises

There is to be a general price increase for huts on seven of the nine Great Walks (excluding the Whanganui Journey and Lake Waikaremoana). The price increase ranges from 6 to 30% (\$2 to \$16 per night) depending on the tracks demand profile with the Milford Track having the highest increase (\$54 to \$70 per night). Campsite fees for four of the eight tracks are also increasing by 7 to 11% (from \$1 to \$2 more per night), again dependant on track use. These changes will be in place by the 16<sup>th</sup> May. <https://booking.doc.govt.nz/>

## Powell Hut, Tararua Forest Park

Powell Hut in Tararua Forest Park is being rebuilt and DOC would like your input. To help ensure the new version of Powell meets the needs of its guests, DOC is seeking your feedback via an online survey. The current Powell Hut structure is still open, but please note that it shouldn't be used during extreme wind events which exceed 180kph. The new hut will still be called Powell and will retain all the things which make the current one so popular. "

Check out the survey at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/GFJX9RR](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GFJX9RR)

*We welcome Richard Hunter and Robyn Buys to the club.*



June Wednesday Tramps		
Date	Leader	Phone
7	Christine Finnigan	329 7822
14	Russel Poole	022 658 0661
21	Denise & Chris Brunskill	354 2511
28	Harold Pettersson	357 4248

June Thursday Tramps		
Date	Leader	Phone
1	Craig Ross	355 3445
8	Nigel & Jill Spencer	329 8738
15	Norman Cooper	357 5531
22	John Doolan	027 446 8740
29	Christine Scott	354 0510

June Weekend Trips				
Date	Trip	Grade	Leader	Phone
1 - 6	Abel Tasman Loop	Medium/Fit	Adam Matich	022 358 8062
Sun 11	Longview Hut	Medium	Tim Swale	06 376 6556
17 - 18	Lodge Food Carry	All	Howard Nicholson	027 294 1941

**Trip Intentions:** The email address for leaving trip intentions is [intentions@mtsc.org.nz](mailto:intentions@mtsc.org.nz). Intentions sent to this address will not be acted upon UNLESS a party is reported overdue (e.g. by a family member, flatmate, friend, etc). The email is sent to several MTSC members. This information will be provided to LandSAR/RCC only if the party is reported overdue or a PLB is activated. The email should include: a list of participants and their contact details; a brief description of the intended route and possible alternative routes; starting point; start date; date/time due out; vehicle registration; and any other relevant details.

### 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> June: Abel Tasman Loop

Medium/Fit

Adam Matich

022 358 8062

[adam.j.matich@gmail.com](mailto:adam.j.matich@gmail.com)

This extended Queen's Birthday weekend (6 days) is a trip covering both the coastal and inland sections of the Abel Tasman track system, starting and finishing at the Eastern end. Winter is a good time to do this tramp as there is generally next to no one there to fill up the huts, which is useful as we are not going to do our hut bookings until the last moment when we know what the weather will be doing. If people are not feeling energetic, they can come

along and only do one half of the trip in that time and use transport services to get back to the start, or take a shortcut somewhere. Late deciders will have to take their chances with getting ferry bookings.

### Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> June: Longview Hut

Easy/Medium

Tim Swale

06 376 6556 or 022 134 8384

Longview Hut is about one and a half hours walk up from the end of Kashmir Road in the eastern Ruahines. There is no forest up here so the views are indeed long. We will have lunch at the hut before heading north-east along the ridge and joining the Daphne Track to drop back down to Kashmir Road.

### 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> June: Lodge Food Carry

All

Howard Nicholson

357 6325 or 027 294 1941

The lodge at Mt Ruapehu will be stocked with food in preparation for the upcoming Winter season of skiing, riding, climbing and sliding. This involves carrying the food from the Top 'o the Bruce Road to the lodge, and usually takes just a few hours to complete. Load bearers, inventorialists, stackers and scone makers are all welcome. There are some general cleaning and maintenance jobs to be done also, but there will be time for a bit of play as well.

Transport from Manawatu will be by club minibus (Friday night) and private cars. Travellers from other locations may be able to car pool. Please let me know ASAP if you are coming along; maybe we can arrange transport with others from your region. Enjoy some pre-season mountain delights before heading home. All welcome!



### Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> April: Going Loopy! New Swing Bridge Connects the Sledge Track to the Arapuke Forest Park

Report: Bob Hodgson

Photos: Bob Hodgson and Paula De Goldi

At 9am on Saturday April 8<sup>th</sup>, a mixed age group of about 35 people assembled in the Kahuterawa Road Car Park about 20mins and 17km drive from the Palmerston North Central Square. Led by Palmerston North City Council (PNCC) staff member, Brian Way, the group walked for about 40mins up the Sledge Track to the site of the new bridge.

The Sledge Track is a popular and very scenic walking and tramping track that gives access to an area of bush reputedly the same size as Kapiti Island. Officially opened on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2003 by Prime Minister, Right Honourable Helen Clark, the Sledge Track was the result of the work of dedicated volunteers led by retired farmer Ian Argyle with the support of PNCC.

The new bridge enhances the Sledge Track by making it a gateway to the Arapuke Forest Park, a large area of harvested pine forest now owned by PNCC.



Brian Way at the New Bridge Sign

Most appropriately Arapuke means 'pathway in the hills'. The bridge makes a number of loop walks possible; as the opening speakers emphasised, loops are **always** more satisfying than walk-in walk-outs! The steep slopes are being left to regenerate in natives. The easier country, where mountain bike and walking tracks will be developed, are to be replanted in various long cycle exotic species including redwoods, macrocarpa and eucalypts. The Park is already the location of 15km of mountain bike tracks mostly developed by the Manawatu Mountain Bike Club with some forestry tracks shared as tramping tracks and some exclusive to bikers.

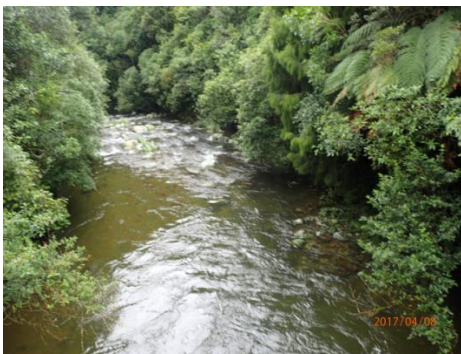
Over the bridge, the connecting track up and into Arapuke Forest Park is the result of a lot of work by volunteers, again led by the redoubtable Ian Argyle. Sadly, Ian was unable to attend the ribbon-cutting ceremony as he was detained in hospital following an operation (happily now discharged).



Brent Barrett Cutting the Ribbon after the Blessing with Todd Taiapa (in green)

The brief and heart-warming ceremony consisted of a speech by Brian Way giving the background to the project and a blessing, karakia and

dedication by Todd Taiepa (the PNCC Principal Maori Advisor) who acknowledged the local Tangata Whenua, Rangitane, and the importance of these projects in reinforcing their connection to the land and their status as Kaitiaki or Cultural Guardians for the river and the wider environment. He acknowledged that the iwi have spent hundreds of years here and it's exciting now for us to have the opportunity to share and collaborate with Rangitane, to enjoy these beautiful places and to commit to maintaining their integrity. This was followed by a brief speech and formal cutting of the ribbon to open the bridge by PNCC Councillor, Brent Barnett. He described the bridge as a vital element in the City's recreation network and a bargain at \$53,000 relative to the \$1million cost of the planned footbridge over the Manawatu River.



*Up Stream and Down Stream of the Bridge*

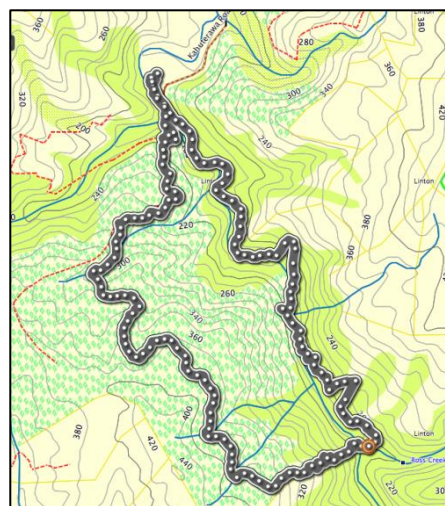


*Heading down the Zig Zag Track*

Time constraints limited me to one of the shorter loops made possible by the bridge, it gave me some fine views especially along the backdrop to the Sledge Track. When regeneration is complete the Arapuke Park has the potential to an especially beautiful area as there is to be specimen tree planting to enhance the bush.

Congratulations and thanks to PNCC, the ratepayers and the volunteers who have contributed to this new community facility. About six members of MTSC attended the opening in the company many members of other local outdoor groups.

The GPS plot shows the path of one of the loop walks made possible by the new bridge. The track to the right from the Kahuterawa Road to the new bridge, indicated by the brown circle, follows part of the existing Sledge Track. The tight contours beyond the bridge indicate a steep climb up a newly cut zigzag track with a height gain of about 180m.



The total height gain on the plotted loop is 246m making it a decent workout. The 180m height gain on the track up from the bridge is almost the same as the total height gain on the popular Tawa Loop at the start of the Manawatu Gorge Track.

## Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> April: Wednesday Wilderness Wanderers "do" Rangi and Deadman's

Report: Bob Hodgson

Photos & Phone App Images: William

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> April was a day that promised scattered rain and an approaching weather event as twenty plus Wednesday Wilderness Wanderers assembled at the car park at the start of the Deadman's and Rangiwahia tracks for a 9am briefing and start. Seven opted to tramp in and out Deadman's, five to tramp the loop "hut first" and the balance of trampers aiming for the Rangiwahia Hut plus minor extensions.



*Even's Heavenly View*



*On Top of the World*

Summary					
	Distance	<b>13.76</b> km		Duration	<b>5:39:11</b>
	Avg. Pace	<b>24:39</b> min/km		Max. Pace	<b>4:12</b> min/km
	Avg. Speed	<b>2.4</b> km/h		Max. Speed	<b>14.3</b> km/h
	Calories	<b>3676</b> kcal		Hydration	<b>2.28</b> liters
	Min. Altitude	<b>833</b> m		Max. Altitude	<b>1555</b> m
	Total Ascent	<b>861</b> m		Total Descent	<b>856</b> m

*Tramp stats*

In the warmish (17°C) day with high humidity and grey skies, coats and layers were rapidly shed as trampers climbed. We experienced no rain until after 2.30pm by which time most had returned to the car park. Track conditions were

generally good with surprisingly little mud except in the descent through the tussock by the loopers. Peter (alias The Flying Dutchman) completed the 13.76km loop in under five hours with new chum Richard, the main group was not far behind (the Loopers used an estimated 3676 K calories!). As cloud and rain were visible in the distance for most of the day we were lucky with the weather, the rain only set in as we got changed and departed. After all had emerged safe and sound we rendezvoused at Hansen's Cafe in Kimbolton where we were made most welcome.

Thanks to trip Leader Leonie and our drivers Chris, Peter and Marion.

## Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> April: WWW Tramp to Sledge Track and Arapuke Forest Park

Report: Alan Rae

A good turnout of 38 members set out on a sunny morning, although a few showers were forecast for lunch time. An attraction was the newly-opened bridge across the river allowing access into the Arapuke Forest Park. This meant that several more options for walking were available, rather than just the up-and-down Sledge Track ramble. We roughly split into two groups. One went as far up the Sledge track to the new bridge, over the bridge, and up the hill via a comfortably graded zig-zag track and then turned right through the forest park back to Black Bridge. The other group went to the top of the Sledge Track for morning tea, before returning back to the new bridge. Having zig-zagged to the top of the hill, some turned left for the longer walk back to Black Bridge, with the remainder turning right for a somewhat shorter return. True to forecast, a misty rain arrived on the stroke of lunchtime, but soon disappeared and the tramp was concluded in dry but overcast conditions. Judging by the turnout and comments back at the car park, the new options provided by this access to Arapuke were much appreciated and enjoyed by the group, and we look forward to a return visit. The walk at the top was rather barren and exposed following logging, but many new conifer plantings were in evidence, promising for a more luxuriant landscape in time.

Thanks to van driver Evan, Marion, Rod and Russell for their cars, and those others who drove themselves.

## 22<sup>nd</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> April: Kime Hut, Tararua Ranges

Report: Pak Lam Yu

Photos: Pak Lam Yu

Trip members: Ivan Rienks (trip organiser), Mary Nulsen, Jenny McCarthy, Helen Peek, Ken Mercer and Pak Lam Yu.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> April, with a barometer reading of 1032hPa and two high pressure systems sitting over New Zealand for a long ANZAC weekend, what could be better than a two-day tramp to the Tararua Ranges? At 9am, we arrived at the Otaki Forks overnight car park; there were already a number of cars there. Our Club van did attract a bit of attention as we pulled into the car park. A sign of relief to the spectators to see only six of us came out from the van, not a full load of people! From Otaki Forks (152m), we started ascending to Field Hut (900m), with the aim of having lunch there. The sign said 3 - 4 hours to get there, but for me it seemed ages. Ivan kept saying 'Pak, keep going'. I did struggle a bit at the beginning, sweating profusely, but at the end I made it to the hut in three hours, a relief to Ken and Ivan. The historic Field Hut was built in 1924 by the Tararua Tramping Club (TTC). It was the first purpose-built tramping hut and the oldest surviving recreational hut in the Tararua Ranges. It has 20 bunks in two levels, a wood burner and a kitchen bench. Inside the hut, among other photos from those early days, there is a large photo of W.H. Field who was the President of the TTC. Most trampers we met on our way to Field Hut seemed to have the same idea of overnighing in Kime Hut. Given there are only a finite number of bunks, it would be interesting where we end up sleeping: the bunks, the floor, the outside deck or in a tent. Keep on reading to find out the outcome 😊



*The MTSC team at Kime Hut*

After having a simple lunch and refilling our water bottles, we kept up with the ascent to Kime Hut (1392m) via Table Top (1047m). It did take about two hours to get to Kime Hut, just what the sign said. On the way, there were plenty of interesting objects for photography: the beech-podocarp forest, the snow grass (tussock), the leatherwood, the white moss, and the lichen cluttered trees. As we walked out into the open near Table Top, the view of the surrounding ridges was just stunning. It was a clear day with very little wind. With more and more trampers catching up from behind us, we were conscious about the accommodation capacity of Kime Hut which has only 20 bunks. This hut was built in 2014 and it is in mint condition. It is well constructed and insulated, although without any heating. Since we do prefer to sleep on soft, warm mattresses, Ivan had a brilliant idea and quietly volunteered to charge ahead of the rest

of us to get to the hut as soon as possible. To our delight he did succeed in getting there early enough to secure six bunks for all of us. Well done, Ivan! As the evening drew near, Kime Hut was full of people. For that night, six

people slept on the floor, two on the outer deck and eight in four tents outside. Everyone was smiling and willing to talk to each other; they shared the kitchen bench for cooking and told plenty of interesting stories over the dining tables. At dinner time, the smell of food was so fantastic, with all the different meals being prepared at the same time e.g. chicken curry rice, mince beef pasta, stir-fried steak and veges filled pita bread.... The stand out of the evening meal for me was the on-the-spot-home-made custard square dessert that Ken and Mary made (asked them for their special recipe).



On the 23<sup>rd</sup> April, after a good night of sleep, we were up quite early. One elder gentleman told me that he could not sleep last night because it was so hot (with the room full of people). According to the visitors' book, more often than not this location is cold and crappy, a day like this with no wind and so warm was one in 100. Because of the nice weather, many made an early start to their next destination which included Maungahuka Hut, a four-hour tramp along the main ridge. Others were heading to Mt Hector (1529m) and Alpha Hut, a five-hour tramp, with the aim of finishing the other half of the Tararua Southern Crossing, coming out at Kaitoki (not far from Upper Hutt). In March, there was the Tararua Mountain Race, one of the oldest mountain races of New Zealand, held on the Southern Tararua Crossing. The winner did the whole track in four and a half hours - what trampers normally do in a trip of three days. I think I prefer the tramping option! On our return trip to Otaki Forks, we met more trampers coming up from Field Hut, which was also full with about 30 people overnighing the evening before. Up on the ridges, the scenery was spectacular and as far as the eye could see to the horizon: Kapiti Island, the East Coast, the distant Mt Taranaki and Mt Ruapehu. At times, batches of light clouds were below us and we felt truly on top of the ranges. It took us half an hour quicker than yesterday to get back from Field Hut to our van. We noticed the overnight car park was full, and could imagine the huts are going to be full again for the night with many happy trampers! This was my first New Zealand hut experience, and what a fabulous one it was! Thank you Ivan for organising the trip and my fellow trip members for their great company. Photo album link: <https://goo.gl/photos/qefXq2rbaAN1ZzFf9>

## 25<sup>th</sup> April: Escarpment Walk

Report: Nicola Wallace

Photos: Adam Matich

We left Palmerston North on a fine, sunny morning, with the first piece of excitement happening on the way South, when we drove on the new Kapiti Expressway, the first time for me. It's a very impressive (and I hear very expensive) piece of road, with many overbridges, and many new plantings and bike tracks off to its sides. It was a quick drive down, as the roads were quiet, and we got to Paekakariki railway station before 9.30am. We were joined by Bernadette here, and off we walked, heading to the centre of Paekakariki before going down Ames St, then under SH1, then we met the official start of the Escarpment Walk (complete with information board). We were informed that the walk was 10km long, and would take about 3.5 hours.

For a while I wondered if we were ever going to go uphill, as we trundled easily along the base of the hill, in alternating sun and shade. It looked as if it would be a busy day on the track, with people in front of and behind us. Periodically we'd stop and let the runners through. After about 20mins we met our first set of steps, and it was all up from there. The track is very well constructed, with short flights of steps interspersed with path of a lesser gradient, so it was quite easy walking, and very enjoyable with the fantastic view of the sea, Kapiti Island, further up the hill and the South Island. The day was perfectly clear, with a very light SE breeze.



Near the highest point we stopped for morning tea, right by the track, where I feared for my cup of tea, with people walking very close. Once food and drink were on board, we headed off on to more undulating track, and what a busy track it now was! We were now meeting people coming from the other direction, so there were lots of "hellos", and everyone seemed to be enjoying the great weather. As for the trees and plants, it was all small to



medium growth. At one point we met volunteers planting on the cliff, which looked to me a very perilous perch. It wouldn't be pleasant on a windy day! Once we started descending, it was lots of steps, down, down, down, without much path in between steps, so I imagine it would be harder walking in the opposite direction to the way we went.



Towards the Southern end, we came to the two swingbridges on the track. These take a maximum of five people at once, so there was some waiting while we let others across. At the top of the climb after one of these bridges stood an elderly gentleman, who was quite rightly preaching to the hot and sweaty, panting masses: "there's no hurry, you've got all day".

And it was hot too, a day when you lost a lot of water as sweat without realising it. Down on the flat now and walking by the railway line, Jeanette and I stopped for a drink. I was aware that I was getting dry, but didn't realise how parched I was till the cool water passed down my blissful throat.

The others were ahead, out of sight, and my phone rang. It was Adam: "stay on this side of the railway line". This Jeanette and I did as we passed through the old, now disused Muri station. Then a short stretch through grass, and we arrived at the end of a cul-de-sac, with the others waiting for us. It had taken them 2hr 35mins, Jeanette and I took a few minutes longer.

A brisk walk to Pukerua Bay station and a train heading north arrived almost immediately. We got on a rear carriage, and as we were going only to the next station (Paekakariki), we thought the ticket lady wouldn't get to us in time. But she did. Going back by train made me realise how far I'd walked, it seemed quite a long way on the train.

Everyone else headed off to a café, but I had a fully outdoor experience by lazing on the grass near the Paekakariki station car park, and ate the lunch I had carried for 10km. Looking over to the hill we'd just walked along, all sorts was happening. A magpie dive bombed a hawk, a microlight flew over, and other things besides. It was probably a typical Wellington day.

The road was not as busy on the way back as we'd expected, probably because we left early at about 2 pm. I had really enjoyed my day and I'm sure everyone else did too. Thanks to Adam for the driving and everyone else for their company.

We were: Adam Matich (trip leader and driver), Jenny McCarthy, Peter Rawlins, Linda Hunt, Bernadette Heaphy, Ivan Rienks, Jeanette Anderson and Nicola Wallace

## Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> April: Emergency for the Thursday Group

Report: Chris Mercer

Photos: Chris Mercer

We had climbed above Herepai Hut to the knob called Herepai in clear conditions but the westerly wind was too strong to go higher safely. Back at the hut, one of our party of seven said he wasn't feeling well but would have a go at walking out. But after about 300m it was clear to everyone that he was in distress and had to lie down again. We were halfway between Herepai Hut and the junction of tracks going to Roaring Stag Lodge and Putara Road End. It was then that we called 111 and relayed what was happening – they said to set off a PLB. Phone connection was intermittent and only Chorus phones had reception.

I knew that smoke is highly visible from the sky so we lit a fire, luckily the bush was dry and fire wood easy to find and burn. Forty minutes later, once we heard the chopper, we made more smoke with wet leaves. The big machine passed close overhead a few times so we were confident they knew where we were. We didn't know they were looking for a point of entry. One of our phones rang and we were told to send two people to the junction. Once



there, we saw the chopper hovering over a gap in the bush, paramedic Steve winched down and introduced himself. He said our smoke was great for locating where we were but he had been delayed getting to us because of the closed canopy of trees. We helped carry the stretcher back to the others.



After the assessment, our patient was feeling better and was able to walk to the gap in the trees - we were quite glad we didn't have to carry him! He was whisked away to Palmerston North and is now being assessed. I have spoken to him - he is in good spirits as he waits for tests.

As trip leader, things I learned from this incident were; stay calm; stand back and keep looking at the overall situation – set priorities; realise that anxiety may make people do the wrong thing; always take the club PLB and fly; ensure that everyone is carrying sufficient clothes to stay in one spot for several hours; make sure everyone is routinely taking torches; and have a great emergency kit including the best fire-lighting stuff you can get. There's more but another time...

This was my third helicopter medivac experience and I'm still learning and preparing better for next time! Thanks to the mature, sensible friends who helped our sick mate. I admire you.

*Postscript from Mandy Williams: Just to let you know he's fine and has undergone tests in the cardio ward. A huge thanks to you all for acting quickly and taking care of him. Most grateful to you all.*

## Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April: Wednesday Wilderness Wanderers return to the Waiopehu Tracks

Report: Bob

Photos: William

On Wednesday April 26<sup>th</sup>, a calm and sunny autumn day, a near record number of thirty-seven Wednesday trampers assembled at the Ponds Road entrance to the Ohau Conservation area and the Tararua Forest Park. At about 9am multiple groups formed and after trip leaders briefing concluded with "... and be back by 3pm" we headed out across the farmland. One group set out to walk in and out, along the river track over the bridge to the meadow, two groups set out to walk the loop formed by the river track, ascending the Six Discs track and return via the Waiopehu track, finally the fast group set out to tramp the loop and add a tail to it by tramping along the Wiopehu track towards Bush Corner. They covered 13km and it is claimed they expended an impressive 3772kcal.



*Morning tea at the Meadow*



Conditions under foot were good with little serious mud encountered, this making a welcome contrast to the conditions of our last visit made in the first week of December last year. On that occasion, the river was in spate and continuous heavy rain caused a group intent on overnighing in the Waiopehu Hut to turn back at about the halfway point.

It was a day of beautiful light in the bush, good spirits and light-hearted chatter that for one group even included confessions of some surprising sleeping habits! As for detail, what is revealed on a tramp stays in the bush! Shortly after 2pm the first string of trampers emerged from the bush and in the manner of well-habituated dairy cows, formed a stately procession across the paddocks to the parked vehicles. To the relief of trip leader, the procession ended at about 2.45pm with all trampers safely returned.

A memorable day completed by a visit to the Museum Café where we were made most welcome.

Thanks to trip leader Anne, our many drivers including Evan who drove the minibus.

## Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May: Wednesday Wilderness Wanderers Tramp the Waitahinga Trails

Report: Bob

Photos: William, Maureen and Sandra

**About the Trails** - This area was purchased by Whanganui District Council in 1903 in what had to be a visionary plan to solve the burgeoning town's water problems. The Waitahinga dam was built in 1904 and its height was increased in 1926. It was decommissioned in the 1990s.

Whanganui Tramping Club approached the Council and gained permission to create and maintain these trails for public use as a community project to mark the 60th anniversary of the club. Harry's ridge and Tom's ridge are named to commemorate stalwart club members Harry Stimpson (1930-2011) and Tom Luff (1935-2011).



Most of the walking trails are under native forest canopy. This forest is a combination of original forest including Tawa and Rimu and very old regeneration dating back to when the land was purchased in 1903. The ancient looking Mahoes on the flatter areas are examples of regeneration. You will follow an old fence line for several kilometres on the longer walks. This fence was built of local Totara and the stumps of the trees felled for it are still evident. In places it is hard to believe the fence is over a hundred years old. Waitahinga is still owned and controlled by the Council.



Morning Tea at Cropper's clearing



An Ancient Specimen

Summary	
Distance	11.82 km
Duration	5:12:32
Avg. Pace	26:27 min/km
Max. Pace	4:41 min/km
Avg. Speed	2.3 km/h
Max. Speed	12.8 km/h
Calories	3387 kcal
Hydration	1.61 liters
Min. Altitude	312 m
Max. Altitude	596 m
Total Ascent	442 m
Total Descent	415 m

Tramp Statistics

On a coolish but dry autumnal day, 26 Wednesday Wilderness Wanderers made their way from State highway 3 via Rangitatau and Junction roads to the Quarry car park for the Waitahinga Trails. Several groups formed, with the exception of two trampers opting not to make the descent, all others made the dam their lunch destination. Cropper's Clearing was a popular morning tea spot. Then most opted to tramp via Tom's Ridge along and down to the dam. This route down is notoriously steep and muddy. One well informed small group chose to make their way from Cropper's to the alternative Harry's Ridge with its easier descent and to eventually tramp up the slippery slope

to Tom's Ridge. In the event we all made it safely up and down to the dam although some muddy bums were noted on return! The fast group of eleven added to their tramp a brief excursion up the Chicken Run for the spectacular view. This added about 1km to the 10.4km round trip to the dam. On a clear day both Taranaki and Ruapehu can be seen from there but not on this day.



*Inspecting the Dam*



*Lunch at the Dam*



*Dancing Dennis*

This is a rewarding tramp with some easy walking, some physical challenge on the ascent and decent, interesting variety in bush and views along with some majestic, ancient tree specimens. *(These specimen trees would typify the selective logging targets recently proposed for the Grey District Council owned reserves by Mayor Tony Kookshoon.)*

We all emerged safely by about 3pm and made our way to the Pukekos Nest cafe on the road to Wanganui where the staff cheerfully and efficiently served us all with coffee and cakes.

Thanks to drivers Evan, Marion, Sandra, Margaret and Bev.

## 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> May: Tutuwai Hut

Report: Nicola Wallace

Photos: Nicola Wallace and Adam Matich

It was a cold but clear morning when we left Palmerston North at 7.30am, and still a beautiful clear day as we approached the Waohine Gorge road end about 2 hours later. You can't get right to the end as a chain across the road about 1 km before the end marks the new parking area. Why this is so became apparent as we walked to the end: a large part of the road is washed away, leaving room for only a motorbike to get through.

Once at the road end, and anxious to really get going because I was still cold, I led everyone down the first track I saw, which unfortunately led not to the big swingbridge, but down to the river (I thought we were going down too far). At least the walk back up the hill warmed us all up, and the proper track was found on the other side of the info board.

So we commenced the first part of the tramp to Cone Hut. We climbed the hill at a pleasant speed, and didn't encounter any muddy bits till after the top. Florencia had running type shoes, not boots, and as she understandably wanted to retain dry feet, she did her best to step around the mud. Several people passed us as we had morning tea



before we descended to Cone Hut where we lunched at the large table outside. No one was at the hut. Cone Hut was looking very spick and span. It now has a wooden floor, and a fine selection of cookware hanging up.

Cone Hut is always a chilly wee spot in the shade, and so after leaving the hut we stopped at the Tauherenikau River at the Bull Mound turnoff to enjoy the sun for a few minutes. The water was a beautiful shade of green. Two big trees had fallen across the river; they could no doubt be used as bridges by the brave. Then it was back into the shade, and the very pleasant amble along the mostly flat track that follows the Tauherenikau River.

At some stage along this track I heard the sound of an engine, and a helicopter flying quite low up the river came into view. After an hour I thought it odd that we hadn't reached the hut, so Ken consulted the GPS tracker on his phone (which marked our location on the map) and we were very close, Indeed Tutuwai Hut was just round the corner.

The approach to the hut is now very civilised, no more grovelling up the steep bank. A good track, with steps and even a section of boardwalk leads you up to the Northern end of the hut. We arrived at about 3.45pm and there were lots of people already there, some cooking on a large two-burner stove on the seat out front. I gazed through the window and saw someone who looked like Adam. Turns out it was Adam, he was there with Jenny. They had already been to visit some other hut whose name escapes me now. Also staying at the hut were a couple of volunteers for DOC, doing some kind of pest plant removal.



*Jenny visiting the Joe Gibbs memorial hut*

The hut continued to fill up. A man and two little boys arrived with a large black dog, which stayed outside and slept on the deck. As for my sleeping arrangements, the woodshed was starting to look like a very good prospect. I moved the wood over to one side, and laid down my big orange pack liner as a way of reserving the only available spot lest anyone else have the same idea.

Tea was a very pleasant affair in a bustling hut. The MTSC group commandeered the table and the DOC man's MSR Dragonfly stove provided that great roaring stove sound that so characterises a tramping hut. I headed off to bed in the woodshed at about 8pm.

I slept well, it wasn't all that cold but the air was damp, it was necessary to wear a hat. I was delighted to hear tales in

the morning of snorers, and one unfortunate person who was muttering gibberish in his sleep. I don't think he was from our club. Adam and Jenny set off early, as they had to be out by lunchtime because Adam had no lunch.

Sunday was another beautiful morning with a little mist hanging over the river. We left the hut at about 8.20am.

The climb up to Mt Reeves is very steep just after leaving the hut but soon eases somewhat. The bush is lovely up here, lots of young Rimu trees. I heard Kakariki chattering occasionally, but didn't see any. It was a special moment, after lots of climbing, when we emerged from the bush and into the sun. It wasn't far from here to Mt Reeves (899m) where just off the track there is a lookout area where we enjoyed the views of the Wairarapa. We looked down on Greytown, but could also see Masterton, Carterton and Martinborough.

We walked for another half hour or so in the sun, before descending back into the bush. Following another small climb, the large DOC sign announcing that the Coal Stream 3-wire bridge had been removed was our cue to leave the main track and take the "unofficial" track back to the road end. At the top it is a little overgrown and

winding, the track markers must be followed carefully for the first few minutes. This track is very well marked – with yellow plastic triangles, blue discs and orange discs. After a few minutes the track became much better defined. It is good to see people using it and looking after it. It makes so much sense to be able to walk a circuit.

After lunch on the downhill, during which we discussed capsicums, we continued down towards Coal Stream. About 20mins before the stream the track steepens markedly. As I picked my way carefully down the slope the sound of the creek became louder, I hoped that someone had put in another bridge of some sort, as the descent into the creek is very steep. No bridge, but we all made it down in one piece. From the creek it was a steep little climb up



*Tutuwai Hut*

(much easier than going down) before passing the track to Cone Hut. At the big swingbridge we met a group of hunters (sans meat) who appeared from the Totara Flats Hut direction.

We had all had a very good tramp, and the mood was happy as we walked briskly back up the road to the car park. There were about 10 people along the road, clearly the altered access arrangements weren't putting people off. After a dairy stop in Carterton, we were back in Palmerston North by 5.30pm.

Thanks to all for their company, and for Ken for leading this trip. We were: Ken and Mary Mercer, Helen Peek, Sebastian Linnenkugel, Florencia Yedro and Nicola Wallace.

## Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> May: WWWs Tramp Braddicks Track Up to Bruce Hill

Report: Bob

Photos: William & Judith

I felt like the Pied Piper as I led our bunch of merry mice, women and men through the wet, long grass in search of the secret passage to the stream of least flow. With dryish boots we assembled on the Eastern bank to begin a zig-zag trail to the turn off to Braddicks Track and up to Bruce Hill. It was a good steep walk to test ones physical stamina. As well as plenty of vantage points along the way to stop and admire the expansive views both south and north. Westwards we could admire Mitre Peak and even make out Powell Hut. There was plenty of bird noise to make us feel a big part of nature, including Kereru, Tui and Whiteheads.



*"..A Good Steep Walk" Jill*



*Lunch With No View*

Summary			
Distance	8.14 km	Duration	5:24:48
Avg. Pace	39:54 min/km	Max. Pace	1:59 min/km
Avg. Speed	1.5 km/h	Max. Speed	30.1 km/h
Calories	3520 kcal	Hydration	1.00 liters
Min. Altitude	291 m	Max. Altitude	692 m
Total Ascent	494 m	Total Descent	473 m

*Tramp stats*

We were blissfully unaware as to the purpose of Robert Bruce's heavy pack. Not stoat traps as rumoured, instead at lunch time we were serenaded by a rendition of familiar melodies on Robert's trusty bagpipes! Thank you Robert, we really appreciated your solo performance while we basked in the warmth and sunshine. Most of the tramping group made lunch at 670 metres and the remainder reached 710m at the trig.



*Robert Bruce delights us all on Bruce Hill*



*View Across to the Tararua*

A very happy bunch gathered in Ekatahuna to dissect the days happenings and put the world to rights. A huge thank you to all the car drivers and to Trip Leader, Jill Faulkner.

P.S. To inspire you all, my 72 year old brother is in Nepal trekking passes 4600 metres high!!



## Contact Details

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### Committee 2015 - 2016

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**General Committee:** Bob Hodgson, Howard Nicholson, Linda Campbell, Karen Tutt, William Laing

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### New Members

Prospective members must be nominated by a Proposer and a Secunder who are current MTSC members and have been so for at least one year. New memberships are confirmed at the next monthly committee meeting. Prospective members are encouraged to go on a club trip or attend a club night before joining. For further information or an application form please see the club website.

### Club Equipment

Hire equipment: we have packs, 2 and 3 person tents, tent flies (small and large), snow mats, gas cookers, size 8 and 9 boots, billies, food dehydrator and two bivvy bags. Ice axes, crampons, and helmets are also available. We have two personal locator beacons (PLB) for which there is no charge. Contact the Gear Custodian: Peter Rawlins on (06) 356 7443.

### Website [www.mtsc.org.nz](http://www.mtsc.org.nz)

This contains club information, photos, contact details and back issues of this newsletter, Beechleaves. The club website is maintained by Howard Nicholson (06) 357 6325 and is kindly hosted by **Inspire Net**, a locally based company.

### Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/MTandSC>

### Accommodation at the MTSC lodge on Mount Ruapehu

The lodge is close to Iwikau Village, has power, heating, hot showers and is stocked with food. Members and their guests are welcome. For Lodge bookings email Liz and Hugh Wilde [lodge.bookings@mtsc.org.nz](mailto:lodge.bookings@mtsc.org.nz) or phone (06) 356 9450. To confirm your booking, payment must be made by cheque to 179 Cook St Palmerston North 4410, by cash in person or internet payment (please email to confirm before depositing) Westpac account number 03 1521 022035300.

	Members	Guests
Adult	\$36	\$51
Secondary School	\$29	\$44
Primary School	\$24	\$39
Pre-school (3-5 yo)	\$11	\$11

The Lodge phone number is (07) 892 3860.

### Booking the MTSC Van

For bookings: Contact Ken Mercer (06) 356 7497. Cancellations should be made as soon as practicable to accommodate other potential users. A tent fly (in the passenger door) and a Personal Locator Beacon (in the glove box) are available for use free of charge on trips.